

The Baptist Record

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Chinese Baptist missionary seeks the best of "all worlds"

By Martha Skelton

HONG KONG — Southern Baptist missionary Sue Shu-Hwa Gardner believes that looking at the world through God's eyes means willingness to leave one's homeland, adopt another, and serve among people in a third country.

A church and home missionary in Hong Kong, Sue was born into a Chinese Roman Catholic family in Taiwan. With two sons, her mother had prayed for a girl, and Sue was born. "I think God (then) wanted to choose me to be his good servant, hopefully a good one."

Her growing-up years help when she talks to Catholics. She knows their teachings and experiences. "It helps me to (be able) to

say, 'Yes, you can be a Christian as a Catholic, depending on your personal relationship with God.'"

As a college student, she struggled with her relationship with God. She looked for help but wasn't satisfied with the responses. While studying English, she met some Baptist friends and missionaries. At a Taiwanese Baptist church, she found answers, was baptized, and became an active member.

She planned to graduate and study pharmacology in New York City. But she met Southern Baptist missionary Don Gardner of Garland, Texas, at a student retreat. By the time she left to study at St. John's University, they were engaged.

Alone in the strange city, she had to deal with leaving her homeland, living in a new country, and clarifying her own mission call as she prepared to marry a man from another culture already committed to missions.

Participating in the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering emphasis helped determine her future. She transferred to Kansas City, Mo., where her husband-to-be was working on a doctorate at Midwestern Seminary. She began seminary training, and they were married in 1983. Don resigned as a missionary, finished school, and was later reappointed with Sue.

The Gardners stayed in the United States until they finished their degrees and Sue became a naturalized American citizen. While in Kansas City, they started a Chinese-speaking Baptist church.

After missionary appointment, they went to Hong Kong, where he teaches at Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary and they both work in New Hope Baptist Church, a mission congregation recently organized into a church.

The Gardners now have three sons: Robert, 9; James, 7; and Micah, 5, so a lot of Sue's time is taken up with family demands. But she still participates in several ministries.

At New Hope, she helped start a children's ministry. "With young children myself, I can really sense the need (for it). New Hope as a mission drew a lot of young people, but a church needs families — both financially and spiritually. A good children's program helps a church grow."

Sue also has a group of mostly young mothers meeting weekly for English practice, Bible study, and western cooking demonstrations. She's been friends with some of them for years, and they've opened up to coming to church.

But several hesitate to become Christians. "They say their children can come to church and be baptized, but not themselves," said Sue. They keep the Chinese traditional

responsibility to worship ancestors and see that they are venerated. Her friends are a prayer priority. She wants them to know Christ and the joy of the Christian life. But she knows deep commitment takes time.

A quiet encourager, Sue understands the different religious teachings many women in Hong Kong have had. She knows the many variations within the Chinese culture. "Here (Hong Kong) people differ from our people in Taiwan like people in New York differ from people in Dallas," she explained.

She knows mothers with school-age children like herself have many demands on their time. They must get their children to school, and sometimes pick them up for lunch, return them to school, and meet them to come home in mid-afternoon.

And in Hong Kong, everyone is busy. Trying to make contacts for church or her English Bible study is very difficult, she said. A phone contact is almost impossible before 11 p.m., she said.

"They don't go home until late and then home for them is just a hotel. Most Hong Kong people have a small (apartment). They don't want to stay there, so after work they go to study more or to work more at a second job," according to Sue. "Now we have a pager phone. Everyone carries one."

Her life, and her prayer, is to faithfully keep a witness going for them.

"For Hong Kong people, life passes so fast," she said. "They really don't have time to think about their relationship with God."

In the season of the Lottie Moon Offering for Foreign Missions when missionaries and their work are spotlighted, Sue asks that Southern Baptists join her in praying for growth and encouragement for the New Hope Church in Hong Kong; Christian women in her group, and their ministry to non-Christians; the Gardner family and others who live and work in the atmosphere of change leading up to Chinese control of Hong Kong in 1997.

Skelton writes for the FMB.



SAMPLING RESULTS — English-language Bible study and cooking bring together these women gathered in the Hong Kong kitchen of Southern Baptist missionary Sue Shu-Hwa Gardner (standing). Testing sponge cake they have just learned to make are (seated, from left) Anita Chiu, Perla Kimayong, Pam DeVoss, Gina Choi, and Daisy Li. (FMB photo by Don Rutledge)

Hispanic harvest

Evangelists who have ministered to Hispanics for decades report that this rapidly-growing segment of America's population is ripe for the gospel message. "We have Hispanics in America who really need to hear the gospel.... There's never been a day for evangelism among Hispanics like today," said Rudy Hernandez, Southern Baptist evangelist and founding pastor of Metro Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas. Hernandez said research in the San Antonio area indicated that 57% of Hispanics who live there consider English their only language, and another 37% are bilingual. Luis Palau, a Portland, Oregon-based evangelist and author, said, "Anglo evangelicals need to know they have a mission field ready, non-resistant, and open to the gospel. (Hispanics) have all the knowledge they need, except a risen Christ who must be received by faith. The only thing they need is someone to tell them, 'Jesus is alive and if you surrender to him, your sins are forgiven. Once and for all, you become a child of God and your home is heaven, forever.'"

Split opinion

Americans believe religion is losing influence in public life, but they also consider religion relevant to solving life's problems. That's according to a Gallup poll conducted among thousands of Americans throughout most of last year. A sense that religion is important in addressing contemporary problems "has been remarkably constant" for over 20 years, said Princeton, N.J.-based pollster George Gallup. A number of studies in this decade has shown that two out of three Americans believe religion is losing influence, but they also believe by a nearly-equal margin that religion can answer all or most of today's problems, Gallup observed. He said a 1957 poll showed that 69% of the populace thought religion was on the upswing, but only 33% believe that is the case today. Most young adults under age 30 who participated in the latest poll believe religion is losing influence (80%), Gallup said, while a third of adults age 30-49 who participated in the survey — and are the most active church-going group — believe religion is gaining momentum in American life.

Looking Back...

10 years ago

Hurricane Kate narrowly misses the Mississippi Gulf Coast, but the state's Baptist disaster relief unit is dispatched to answer emergency feeding requirements in the Florida panhandle where 100,000 homes were affected by the storm.

20 years ago

Mississippi ministers and church staffers are warned that they are among the groups covered under legislation signed into law recently by Gov. Bill Waller that legally requires the reporting of any suspected child abuse.

50 years ago

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board adopts a \$175,000 budget — the largest in state convention history — and agrees to maintain the current Cooperative Program division of 60% for state causes and 40% for southwide causes.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

Hooked!

The big bass warily eyed the painted lure. It didn't look much like a minnow, but the eyes looked real and it was moving. The bass hit it hard, and headed for the bottom. So easy, a piece of cake; but the minnow's taste was beginning to change. As the fish swallowed the lure, the fisherman gave the line a strong jerk. The three-barbed hooks bit deeply into the flesh. The bass was hooked.

Gambling is the lure and Americans are being hooked. It is an exciting picture, beautifully painted with thousands of dollars spent on camouflage. Just think, something for nothing... plus the food is cheap.

"Sure," says the gambler, "I've lost a few times but I feel lucky today." Soon, his every spare moment and most of his dollars are directed toward the rolling slots or the spinning wheels. He is hooked.

In 1974, Americans wagered \$17 billion, according to the Geor-

gia Baptist newsjournal, **Christian Index**. By 1992 the figure had risen to \$329 billion. Two years later, in 1994, the total was over \$500 billion. In the Magnolia State in 1994 a total of \$29.7 billion was wagered.

How much is that? Our state budget was \$7 billion in 1994 and our taxable retail sales — statewide — totalled \$24.6 billion. Retail merchants should be among the strongest opponents of legalized gambling.

These amounts do not include the federally-regulated Silver Star Casino in Philadelphia, owned by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Now the cry is for more gambling. Other cities and counties want separate but equal casinos — or perhaps a lottery, and throw in horse racing for good measure. Most states are clamoring for a piece of the pie.

Even *Newsweek* magazine

(Feb. 6, 1995) asked the question, "What Ever Happened to Sin?" A tide of evil seems to have swept over the land and now as a nation we can call "good, evil and evil, good." As we have learned to tolerate abortions, pornography, and an X-rated cesspool society, so we become more tolerant of gambling.

Many folks are quick to point out the 8,000-plus people who are employed at the casinos. Tax coffers are overflowing, causing the cynical to observe: "How can that be bad?"

Meanwhile, back to the lake. The bass fights, leaps, twisting in a silver spray. Regardless of his efforts, he is reeled in. The fisherman holds him up for a moment, admiring the beauty of the fighter. Then he drops the bass in the basket. The big fish no longer has freedom and he is no longer a vital part of the lake. He'll be in somebody's skillet by nightfall.

Hooked!

Small church and Power Team garner 343 professions of faith

By Lonnie Wilkey

PULASKI, Tenn. (BP) — The five-day crusade hosted by First Church, Pulaski, Tenn., definitely was not the typical Southern Baptist revival.

But neither were the results — more than 900 decisions, including 343 professions of faith and 466 commitments. Approximately 8,500 people attended the five services held at Martin Methodist College's Curry Christian Life Center.

Using the Power Team, a group of world-class athletes who capture the audience's attention by feats of strength, First Church accomplished its goal of attracting people to the services who probably would not have gone to a "typical" church service.

"We were not reaching the people we wanted to reach," said Ron Galyon, the church's pastor. "We needed a tool to reach those people and the Power Team was that tool."

Blowing up hot water bottles until they burst, breaking concrete blocks with their heads, snapping handcuffs, breaking baseball bats, and bending steel bars were just some of the "attention-getters" used by the Power Team, a Dallas-

based group founded 18 years ago and led by John Jacobs.

Throughout their feats of strength, the Power Team constantly pointed out the real source of power and strength for any person is Jesus Christ.

"We're not here to show off our muscles. We're here to encourage you in the Lord," Jacobs told nearly 2,000 people who attended the last night of the crusade.

"Our whole message is to bring people to the direction of the cross," added Power Team member Berry Handley.

In addition to the crusade services, Power Team members also delivered anti-drug and anti-alcohol messages in five area schools. A sixth assembly was scheduled and later canceled at Richland High School — the day a student entered the school and shot two teachers and a student, two of whom died (See sidebar).

The Power Team

Churches deal with trauma of school shooting rampage

PULASKI, Tenn. (BP) — Baptist leaders in Giles County, Tenn., don't believe it was a coincidence the Power Team, an evangelistic group geared toward youth, was in town when tragedy struck Richland High School in Lynnville.

On Wednesday, Nov. 15, a student entered the high school and went on a shooting rampage, killing two people — a student and a teacher — and injuring another teacher.

"Only the providence of God could have had the Power Team here," said Carl Bond, director of missions for the Giles Association. "Their ministry during this time was very important."

Ron Galyon, pastor of First Church, Pulaski, which sponsored the five-day crusade, noted there were more young people than expected at the crusade on its first night, Nov. 15. Many were from Richland High School, he noted.

The crusade gave them "a place to turn to," Galyon said.

The tragedy has shaken the entire community, local ministers agree; Richland High School is one of only two high schools in the county.



THE FRAGMENTS

Which is the greater fear?

PRIDE, the national Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education, recently sent out a questionnaire which was completed by 198,241 high school students in 32 states. Half of the students who responded said their parents do not discipline them for breaking rules and 33% said their parents do not set clear rules for them to follow. Often the children are considered and treated as grown-ups.

The results of the study disclosed (and this is difficult to fathom) that one out of five high school seniors smokes marijuana at least monthly. The number of junior high students using marijuana rose from 4.5% to 9.5% in past five years.

drew people to the crusade because it was not the typical revival, Galyon said.

"So many times our evangelism efforts draw primarily Christians," he noted. "But in order to be fishers of men, you have to use bait that will reach the people who need it (the gospel)."

Yet the crusade also attracted its share of Christians, especially early in the week, Galyon said. Many of them returned later in the week and brought a lost person with them, he said.

The church fell short of its goal of 1,000 professions of faith, but it was very satisfied with the results, especially the rededications, Galyon said.

Although the Power Team crusade primarily was sponsored and

Some 44% of high school students smoke cigarettes, the highest level since 1988. It is estimated that 3,000 children begin smoking every day.

"Parents are making a big mistake by not talking to their children about abstaining from drug use," said Doug Hall, vice-president for PRIDE.

The children said when they are at the critical time — most vulnerable — their parents are not talking to them about drug use.

Mississippi is blessed with some of the finest students anywhere. Let's hope that Mom and Dad are not afraid to talk with them about drug use.

GH

funded by First Church, they had plenty of help, Galyon said. Ten other area Baptist churches assisted in the effort as counselors and in other roles. Several churches from other denominations played an important role as did Martin Methodist College, Galyon said.

He noted that in order to carry out a Power Team crusade, "you have to have a church completely ready to work together. Our church worked harder than any I've ever seen." The church paid all the expenses of the Power Team, plus the expenses related to their feats of strength. He said he feels First Church has proven a smaller church can tackle such an overwhelming project.

Wilkey is associate editor, Tennessee BAPTIST & REFLECTOR.

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FMB fires missionary couple for charismatic practices

SINGAPORE (ABP) — A Southern Baptist missionary couple in Singapore has been fired by the Foreign Mission Board for promoting charismatic practices.

Charles and Sharon Carroll, 13-year missionary veterans, were dismissed as missionaries for practices "not consistent with what Foreign Mission Board personnel should be encouraging and leading," according to their letter of termination.

The Community of Praise Church has participated in healing, speaking in tongues, laying-on of hands, and exorcism since its beginning. The Carrolls founded the church in Singapore in 1990.

Jerry Rankin, who was area director for FMB mission work in the region before his election as FMB president in 1993, encouraged and supported Carroll's ministry at the time, according to both Carroll and Rankin. But recently the practices simply went too far, Rankin told Associated Baptist Press.

At issue is the experience of "falling under the Spirit," also called being slain in the Spirit, in which a worshiper falls to the floor apparently in an unconscious or semi-conscious state. The practice is not a major element in worship at the Singapore church, said Carroll, the church's pastor, but it has been seen more frequently in recent months.

Rankin said the charismatic practices at Community of Praise have caused "dissension and confusion" among Baptists in Singapore and that the Carrolls are guilty of insubordination. "All of that kind of worked together" to

force the termination, Rankin said.

Carroll, 41, told ABP there is no evidence of dissension among Baptists in Singapore, where charismatic worship is common. And the couple insists they have not violated any FMB policy or the agency's doctrinal statement, "The Baptist Faith and Message."

The couple was asked to resign but refused, saying it would be unethical. They are appealing their termination, which takes effect Dec. 31.

While charismatic worship and "power evangelism" are foreign to the Western mindset and Baptist experience, Carroll said, they are increasingly important elements in successful missions work worldwide.

"Demonstrations of God's power," he said, "are prominent in virtually every culture where Christian revival and evangelism is occurring," particularly in Southeast Asia and in the "10-40 window" — the unevangelized region of the world that lies roughly between 10 degrees and 40 degrees north latitude, also referred to as "World A."

"In that part of the world, a demonstration of God's power is an awesome tool in evangelism," said Carroll, who will occasionally pray for individuals to be delivered from demons or be miraculously healed.

"What we have done is to allow some experiences that are essentially incompatible with traditional Southern Baptist ministry styles or culture," Carroll told fellow Singapore missionaries when his firing was announced. "We do not believe that the unreached

people of the '10-40 window' and elsewhere will ever be reached without God's miraculous intervention in their lives, which may include signs and wonders that have not been a normative part of Southern Baptist church life in the United States."

Southern Baptists are in danger of being left out of the movement of God by not being open to charismatic revival, said Carroll, whose church has sent missionaries to India, where they have started 21 churches and 42 mission points — charismatic-style congregations that are counted among the FMB's annual statistics for church starts.

Ironically, Rankin himself was almost fired while serving in Southeast Asia, and later faced strong opposition to his election as president, because of his openness to charismatic practices on the mission field.

"I always felt my inerrant view of Scripture confirmed the validity of charismatic gifts," he told ABP. But, he added, he has conformed his views to fit "the context God has placed me in" as a Southern Baptist missionary.

The FMB supports missionaries who see charismatic gifts as valid, he said, "but when that moves into doctrinal matters, we have to have wisdom." Teaching

that charismatic experiences are "normative" is theologically out of bounds, he explained.

Charles Carroll said he and his wife served a full term as FMB missionaries in the 1980s, starting churches in Singapore the "traditional" way, but felt "something was missing" in their ministry. They returned to the United States on furlough and leave so that Charles could complete a doctor of philosophy degree at Southwestern Seminary, studying about spiritual awakenings.

Carroll said his firing is painful but he does not feel betrayed or bitter, even though Rankin supports his dismissal.

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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Baptists' elder statesman Herschel Hobbs dies at 88

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) — One of Southern Baptists' most loved and best known figures, Herschel H. Hobbs, died Nov. 28 in an Oklahoma City hospital. He was 88.

A heart attack was listed as the cause of death, according to officials at Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City, where he had been hospitalized three times in recent weeks, suffering from congestive heart failure.

Services were held Dec. 2 at First Church, Oklahoma City. Eugene Garrison, Hobbs' successor as pastor at the church, officiated.

Hobbs was a legend in Southern Baptist life. Pastor, writer, teacher, theologian, and statesman were some of the titles Hobbs earned during a ministry of 69 years. Hobbs was first and foremost a pastor, according to his autobiography, **Herschel H. Hobbs: My Faith and Message**, published in 1993.

"If I had 10,000 lives to live, I would want to be a pastor in every one of them," Hobbs said in his book. He was pastor of First Church, Oklahoma City, for 23 years and pastor-emeritus since 1973. Prior to First Church, Oklahoma City, he served churches in Birmingham, Mobile, and Montgomery, Ala.; Alexandria, La.; and Crestwood, Ky.

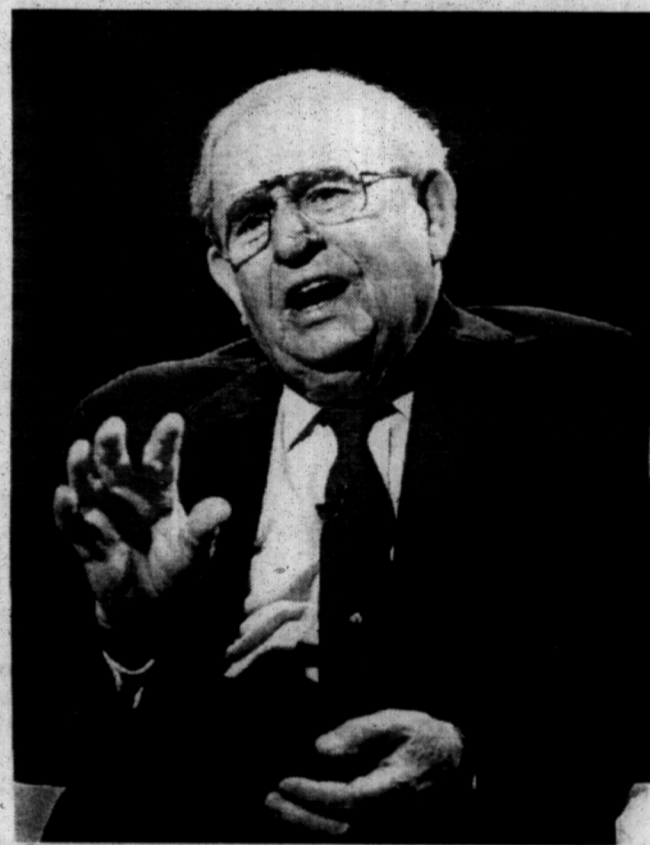
But to many he was "Mr. Southern Baptist" because of his leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) as a popular teacher, theologian, and esteemed statesman for the nation's largest evangelical denomination.

He was the Baptist Sunday School Board's most prolific writer, writing Bible study textbooks and many other books and articles for the board. Hobbs had completed lessons through September 1996, according to board officials. He continued to write a newspaper column titled "Baptist Beliefs."

A former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Hobbs is probably best known as chairman of the 24-member committee which drafted a statement of Baptist beliefs, a statement now known as the 1963 "Baptist Faith and Message." It remains a foundational guideline of beliefs undergirding the SBC and its agencies.

In 1985, Hobbs was named to the 22-member Peace Committee that studied the SBC doctrinal controversy that erupted in 1979.

Millions of people around the world knew Hobbs as the "Baptist Hour" preacher. He preached



Herschel Hobbs

more than 700 sermons on the Radio and TV Commission's syndicated worship service in a ministry that began with a three-month agreement in 1958 but grew into 20 years.

Born near Talladega Springs, Ala., Hobbs was baptized at age 11 in a rural creek in Montevallo, Ala., and ordained to the ministry on June 19, 1929, at Ensley Church, Birmingham. He finished Howard College (now Samford University) in 1932; received a master of theology degree from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., in 1935 and the doctor of philosophy degree in New Testament interpretation in 1938.

Herschel Harold Hobbs is survived by a son, Jerry of Houston, and two granddaughters. Hobbs' wife of 57 years Frances preceded him in death in 1984.

(See related articles on page 6.)

Friends of Herschel Hobbs mourn; recall his life, work

NASHVILLE (BP) — Herschel Hobbs' death Nov. 28 is a great loss to Southern Baptists. Many of his friends, Southern Baptist leaders themselves, mourned his death and spoke of their memories.

"Our Southern Baptist Zion has lost one of its greatest stalwarts, one of its greatest preachers, one of its greatest biblical commentators, and one of its greatest church leaders and builders," said W.A. Criswell, pastor emeritus of First Church, Dallas, whose friendship with Hobbs began when they were students at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

"Dr. Hobbs is the Sunday School Board's most prolific writer," said James T. Draper Jr., BSSB president. "Through his quarterly Sunday School lesson commentary for adult teachers, which he has written for 28 years, he has influenced the quality of Bible teaching and learning in thousands of classes."

For Criswell and Mississippi-an James L. Sullivan, retired BSSB president, Hobbs was a longtime friend.

"Herschel Hobbs and I have

referred to ourselves as 'the gold dust twins,' who were inseparable," Sullivan said. "This was not only because of our close and enduring friendship and associations, but also because we were both reared in the same geographical area, studied under the same professors, and saw nearly everything alike when issues arose concerning theology or denominational loyalty. Our associations were many, and our affections for each other remained deep."

Hobbs and Sullivan were classmates at Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky., from 1932-35 and Criswell was a year ahead of them. All three were working toward masters' degrees at the time.

Another peer and good friend, H. Franklin Paschall, retired longtime pastor of First Church, Nashville, said Hobbs' leadership (in the denomination) will be sorely missed.

"He was one of the outstanding Baptist leaders of all time," Paschall said. "He served his day and generation well; his writings are a fitting memorial." Paschall said Hobbs was a great "Baptist statesman."

Baptist ethicists divided over U.S. involvement in Bosnia

(ABP) — Ethicists, like the American public, are divided over President Clinton's decision to send U.S. troops into Bosnia.

Clinton announced plans to deploy troops in a televised address Nov. 27. The U.S. will provide 20,000 troops for a 60,000-troop NATO peacekeeping operation, he said.

The mission will be limited and focused on implementing a peace plan recently initiated by leaders of Serbia, Croatia and the Bosnian Muslims, Clinton said. Deployment will begin after a ceremonial signing of the accord in Paris in mid-December.

"America's role will not be about fighting a war. It will be about helping the people of Bosnia to secure their own peace agreement," Clinton said.

"In the choice between peace and war, America must choose peace," he added.

A **USA Today**-CNN-Gallup Poll following Clinton's speech showed 46% of Americans favor the deployment while 40% oppose it.

Baptist ethicists contacted by Associated Baptist Press also differed over the morality of military intervention.

Glen Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., lauded the peace agreement negotiated by leaders in the former Yugoslavia and supported the decision to use American troops to enforce it.

"Jesus commanded when there is something between you and your brother, go talk and be reconciled. The Dayton conference was a victory for Jesus' rule. Now we need to do our part to support the peace," Stassen said.

Richard Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission, meanwhile, said he has "profound discomfort with the nature of this intervention" and noted similarities with American involvement in Vietnam during the 1960s.

U.S. troops are going "into a situation where they are not going to be peacekeepers, they are going to be peacemakers," Land said. "The difference is they are coming in heavily armed, they are coming in to separate and stay between forces and implement and guarantee implementation of a peace agreement

that a lot of people on the ground are unhappy with."

Ken Sehested, executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, said the war in Bosnia poses "a deeply complex issue." While America should have intervened "a long time ago," he said he would rather see military force avoided.

"I would say anyone who feels that the use of violence can be redemptive, I don't see how they can oppose sending U.S. troops there," Sehested said. "I happen not to feel violence can serve a redemptive purpose."

"I am not at all clear that's the right thing to do," said Daniel Heimbach, professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

"Speaking as a Christian ethicist out of the just-war tradition, there are a number of principles one has to consider when sending troops into a wartime situation," Heimbach said.

Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics, said the conflict in Bosnia "presents American Christians with their most significant moral dilemma on the global scene since the Gulf War."

While allowing the situation to continue unabated is "morally unacceptable," Parham said, he agreed intervention by troops fails to meet just-war criteria and is therefore "morally unjustifiable."

"Military intervention will not correct injustice, has little chance for success, is not the last resort for a just peace, offers little hope to immunize civilians from conflict and will not end the conflict," said Parham, of Nashville.



The Metro (formerly Hinds-Madison) Association held its annual meeting Oct. 9 at Calvary Church, Jackson. In attendance were (from left): Frank Thomas, pastor of Alta Woods Church, Jackson, who delivered the sermon; Charles Gentry, moderator and retired pastor of Wynndale Church, Jackson; and Eddie Hamilton, director of missions.

Church pension measure dropped from budget reconciliation bill

DALLAS (BP)—The proposed Church Retirement Benefits Simplification Act of 1995 passed the U.S. Senate, but was dropped from a budget reconciliation bill in conference committee.

Now the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and other members of the Church Alliance, encompassing the 29 benefits boards of 29 religious groups, are scrambling to try to get the measure attached to another bill.

One of the reasons for urgency is a new Internal Revenue Service audit guideline that declares a minister's housing allowance in retirement "net income" subject to self-employment (SECA) tax.

"It is imperative that this bill be enacted in this calendar year," said Thomas E. Miller Jr., senior vice president for public relations at the SBC Annuity Board. "The proposed act, which has negligible revenue implications for the federal budget, is extremely important to clarify the law on church pensions."

Annuity Board President Paul W. Powell sent a letter to affected pastors and denominational executives Nov. 22 asking them to write President Clinton, Senate majority leader Bob Dole, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and

other congressional leaders urging them to attach the bill to some piece of appropriate legislation. The Senate bill is S. 881, and a companion House bill is H.R. 528.

While the audit guideline is considered a critical issue, the multi-denominational Church Alliance also is seeking simplification of rules applicable to church pension plans and clarification of the right of chaplains to continue participation in church plans.

Powell alerted Southern Baptists to the new IRS audit guideline in August after publication of the **MSSP Audit Guide for Ministers' Returns**. In that publication, the IRS instructs tax examiners to claim a 15.3% self-employment (SECA) tax on that portion of a retired minister's benefit that is declared a minister's housing allowance.

"That guideline," Miller said, "is not in keeping with IRS Publication 517, and we are certain Congress never intended for the tax to apply to the housing allowance as a part of a retirement benefit."

Miller noted ordained ministers must pay self-employment tax on both taxable income and a housing allowance or value of a parsonage while they are

employed. "But to apply the SECA tax to a housing allowance in retirement would defeat the purpose of Congress in permitting the allowance in the first place," he said.

Representatives of church pension boards met in Nashville, Nov. 29-Dec. 1 in a scheduled annual meeting, but officers have been standing by to fly to Washington for a meeting with congressional leaders if arrangements can be made.

Miller said letters, calls, and telegrams are needed to the top congressional leaders, including Senators Dole, Trent Lott of Mississippi, and William Roth, and Congressmen Gingrich, Dick Armey, and Bill Archer.

"I don't think there could be too many contacts," Miller said. "We need to get their attention, and get it now."

Dockery nominated to head Union University, Tenn.

JACKSON, Tenn. (ABP) — David Dockery, vice president for academic administration at Southern Seminary, has been nominated to become president of Union University, a Baptist school of about 3,800 students, located in Jackson, Tenn.

Dockery, 43, came to the seminary staff in 1992 as dean of the

theology school and became the seminary's top academic officer in 1993. He has been widely credited as a cohesive force among the seminary faculty during three tumultuous years of transition on the Louisville, Ky., campus.

If elected to the post, Dockery would succeed Hyran Barefoot, who is retiring as university

president May 31.

Dockery came to the seminary from Nashville, where he was general editor for Broadman Press. Prior to that, he taught New Testament at Southern Seminary and Criswell College in Dallas. He also was pastor of Metropolitan Church in Brooklyn, N.Y., from 1982 to 1984.

SBC CP, designated gifts up in Nov.

NASHVILLE (BP) — Cooperative Program (CP) gifts for the month of November were up slightly above a year ago and designated gifts were up nearly 40%, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee.

CP gifts were \$10,743,955 for November 1995, compared to \$10,571,736 in November 1994, an increase of \$172,219 or 1.63%. For the two months of the SBC fiscal year-to-date, CP gifts stand at \$21,681,338 compared to the same period a year ago of \$22,276,134, a difference of \$594,795 or 2.67%.

Designated gifts for the month of November were up 39.83%: \$2,506,283 for 1995 compared to \$1,792,440 in 1994, a difference of \$713,843. For the fiscal year-to-date, designated gifts stand at \$4,832,858, compared to the same period a year ago of \$3,758,661, an increase of \$1,074,197 or 28.58%.

The SBC CP Allocation Budget monthly requirement is \$11,802,427. For the fiscal year-to-date, CP gifts are \$1,923,515, or 8.15%, below the budget requirement.

Mississippi gifts to CP up \$1 million — 5 percent — over November 1994

Mississippi Baptists gave \$2,176,347 through the Cooperative Program in November, according to Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, which disburses the funds.

The November amount pulls the 1995 total giving up to \$21,520,855. This is more than one million dollars (\$1,040,272, or 5.08%) more than that given in the first 11 months of 1994.

Cooperative Program giving in Mississippi for 1995 is exceeding the pro rata budget by \$798,158. The pro rata budget is figured by taking the total budget of \$22,606,579, dividing by 12, and multiplying by the number of months elapsed. That figure is \$21,520,855.

Is television responsible for America's drug problem?

By C.C. Risenhoover

FORT WORTH (BP) — Some people think television is the reason why America, with only 2% of the world's population, consumes 65% of the world's supply of hard drugs.

Other people refuse to accept such an easy explanation, but even they have difficulty denying that TV sells addiction and is itself addictive.

So why not blame television? Television, like drugs, dominates the lives of its addicts. TV promises drug addicts all the pleasures they say life denies them. In fact, the drug plague coincides with the unspoken assumption of most television shows, which is that life should be easy.

Such TV shows contradict the teaching of Jesus, who taught joy in living but did not promise believers an easy life.

Nobody seems to work on TV except cops, doctors, and lawyers.

Complicated events are summarized in a minute or less on TV news.

Commercials tell viewers that if they drink the right beer they will be exuberant and happy. So why should real life be such a grind?

Surveys show the average American family is watching television more than seven hours a day. That sort of time commitment to a passive activity is beyond the realm of common sense. No society in history has ever spent that much of its time being entertained.

If people spend one or two hours a week in church and 49 hours in front of a TV set, which do you think is going to have the most influence on them?

TV and hard drugs have paralleled each other during the more

than 40 years in which they have festered into full-fledged sores on the American landscape. Simply put, drugs, TV, and two generations of Americans grew up together during that period.

In the 1940s and '50s TV was in its infancy and drugs were more a rumor than the nightmare they are today. Drugs were not a major problem.

But then, neither was TV. Until the early '60s, hard drugs were still marginal to life in America. So was TV.

There were about 32 million TV sets in the country in 1955. Now there are more than 200 million TV sets and hard drugs are no longer marginal. They make up a \$150 billion annual market.

The drug problem is not cyclical. It is here and thriving because of cultural changes that encourage addictive patterns in society. One of those primary "changes" is television, which has been the most important, most prominent cultural element in American society over the past four decades. Television is, arguably, the best seller of addiction the world has ever known.

That is because television has provided advertising the type of soapbox and audience access necessary to really become creative in the selling of addiction.

It should also be mentioned that advertising and the media grew up together. Media, especially TV, instead of being an innocent and noble reporter, are a co-participant in society's addiction. The media does not, will not, bite the hand that feeds it. And, advertising feeds it very well.

Excessive TV viewing makes a

person asocial, just as a drug addict is asocial. TV devotees tend to become alienated and isolated from the outside world. The same can be said about drugs.

Children learn quickly. If a child is constantly exposed to cute 30- and 60-second beer commercials, chances are pretty good he or she will attribute fun and good times to drinking. So parents need to explain to the child how advertising is trying to manipulate her or him.

If a parent allows his or her child, or children, to watch TV, there is also a responsibility for continuing education on the part of the parent.

Risenhoover writes for the SBC Radio and TV Commission.



Helping educate pastors

Tim Sisk of Starkville (center) has been awarded the Clausen scholarship at Mississippi College (MC) by the Ministerial Association of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Sisk, a senior religion major, is the son of Larry and Susie Sisk of Starkville. He and his wife, the former Lorie McClure of Ackerman, reside in Clinton. Sisk currently serves as pastor of Pilgrim's Rest Church, Eupora. He was presented the award by Loyd Allen (left), of the MC Department of Christian Studies and Philosophy, and Harold Bryson (right), of MC's Institute on Christian Leadership.

America's legal system is on verge of becoming "litigation apocalypse"

MIAMI (BP) — Attorney Warren Kniskern says he believes America's legal system is on the verge of a "litigation apocalypse" that will only be reversed by changed hearts.

To illustrate his contention, Kniskern cites some frightening statistics in his recently released book, **Courting Disaster**, published by Broadman & Holman Publishers of the Baptist Sunday School Board. A former partner in a New York law firm, Kniskern now has his own law practice in Coral Gables, Fla., outside Miami. He is a member of the American Bar Association, Florida Bar, and Christian Legal Society.

— At the beginning of this decade, the National Center For State Courts (NCSC) reported new cases filed in state courts

exceeded 100 million — the equivalent of one case for every three persons in the United States.

— The average lawsuit takes 19 months to work its way through court. During 1991 plaintiffs and defendants paid out \$22 billion in attorneys' fees.

— Between 1984 and 1991, civil caseloads rose by 33%, criminal caseloads by 24% and juvenile caseloads by 34%. Meanwhile, the national population grew by just 7%.

— The overloaded U.S. legal system means that (via taxes and fees) the average American pays more in court costs per year than for groceries, according to Kniskern.

This poses both a lesson and a challenge for churches — namely, to develop ways of resolving disputes so that the problems

within the body of Christ remain private, Kniskern said. The saddest aspect of the legal assault on Christianity is it originated with believers who willingly opened the door to the courts, said the born-again lawyer.

Because Christians aren't taking care of matters inside the church, he said, when conflicts arise members are inclined to run to the world. This creates two problems:

1) Non-believers are "turned off" because their perception of Christians is "they're not any better than anyone else, and they may be worse. So why would I want to join them?"

2) When Christians start airing their disputes publicly and giving the world a foothold in the sanctuary, it can raise thorny constitutional issues that lead to rulings negatively affecting the church.

Prom Promise 1996 registration pushes high school anti-alcohol safety message

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Teenagers across the country face peer pressure daily. Sometimes giving in to peer pressure can be a positive step.

That's the case for more than 3 million teenagers who will be invited to sign the Nationwide Insurance Prom Promise, a pledge not to use drugs or alcohol, especially on prom night. In the coming months, those students will be pressuring one another to make that choice which could help save a life — maybe their own.

Automobile accidents involving teenage drivers are a major safety problem in this country. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that 6,226 teenagers died in 1994 as a result of automobile crashes.

Nearly 35% of those deaths involved alcohol.

In the Prom Promise program's first year, 1990, 80,000 students at 160 schools participated. The program reached nearly 3 million teens at 3,600 high schools in 1995. Nearly 3,900 schools are expected to carry the Prom Promise message to more than 3 million teens in 1996.

The Nationwide Insurance Prom Promise program is endorsed by the National Commission Against Drunk Driving, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the American Coalition for Traffic Safety, the Bacchus and Gamma Peer Education Network, and by media outlets around

the country.

Schools in 22 states and the District of Columbia are now registering to be part of Prom Promise 1996. Students and their advisors will pair up with local Nationwide Insurance agents to develop special campaigns to encourage their classmates to sign the Prom Promise pledge. All materials, resources, and tools needed to make the campaigns a success are provided free to the schools by Nationwide Insurance.

For more information, contact a local Nationwide Insurance agent; call the Prom Promise Information Line at (800) 211-PROM (7766); or write the Prom Promise Coordinator, c/o Nationwide Insurance, One Nationwide Plaza, Columbus, OH 43215-2220.



Collecting for Lottie

Gulfshore Assembly manager Frank Simmons (left) presents a Lottie Moon Christmas Offering gift of \$1,163.74 to Marjean Patterson, director of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union. The gift was made by Gulfshore staffers, who collected 2,189 pounds of empty soft drink cans used by assembly guests and sold the cans to a local recycling company. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Statesman says CBF would not exist had moderates been included in SBC

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) — In one of his last public appearances before his death on Nov. 28, Southern Baptist elder statesman Herschel Hobbs said Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders could have prevented formation of the rival Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), had they heeded a 1987 recommendation to include moderates in leadership positions.

Conservative leaders of the SBC regard the CBF, formed by moderates in 1991, as a nemesis, saying it competes for missions funding in Baptist churches. Most recently leaders have pressured Woman's Missionary Union, an SBC auxiliary, to back off from plans to offer curriculum promoting CBF missionaries.

However, Hobbs, who was 88 years old at the time of his death, said moderates formed the rival organization only after conservatives controlling the SBC ignored recommendations of the SBC Peace Committee calling for balancing leadership in the convention between the two factions.

"If those recommendations had been followed — balanced appointments, balanced faculties, boards — we would never have had a Cooperative Baptist

Fellowship," Hobbs said.

Hobbs offered the observation Oct. 24 during a week-long dedication of a new Beeson Divinity Hall at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. A Tuesday evening banquet honored Hobbs and another SBC patriarch, W.A. Criswell. Both men departed briefly from a program of light-hearted story-telling to lament division in the SBC.

Criswell, 85, longtime pastor of First Church in Dallas, blamed moderates for the schism.

"The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is such a strange development to me," Criswell said. "For churches and pastors to leave our convention because of what someone in the convention believes — I don't understand that."

"If I am of a certain turn in my devotion and worship and another man is of another turn, let him preach what he believes and expound that, and we stay together," Criswell said.

The Peace Committee, appointed in 1985, brought moderate and conservative leaders together in a last-ditch effort aimed at healing a growing rift in the nation's largest Protestant body. Most observers said the

1987 report favored conservatives and contributed to greater polarization, culminating in the formation of a separate moderate Fellowship in 1991.

Among the committee's recommendations was that future presidents and committees of the convention select nominees for leadership roles "in a balanced fashion from the broad spectrum" of Southern Baptists.

Implementation of the report, however, focused on other recommendations calling for a narrowing of theological parameters at Baptist institutions.

Hobbs, a member of the committee, said he opposed last-minute changes in the document that he feared would cause it to be used as a creed.

Criswell was identified as a leader in the conservative juggernaut which gained control of the SBC during the 1980s. Hobbs, a popular authority on Baptist doctrine, endorsed neither side in the long-running battle.

Another guest invited was Duke McCall, moderate leader and longtime president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. McCall was recovering from recent eye surgery and unable to attend.

Memorial service held...

Criswell remembers Hobbs as friend

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) — Friends and loved ones gathered Dec. 2 for a final farewell to Herschel H. Hobbs, memorializing him as one of the "great men of the Christian faith."

The memorial service for Hobbs, 88, who died Nov. 28 of a heart attack, was held in the Louise Prichard Chapel of First Church, Oklahoma City, where he was pas-

tor for 23 years. More than 400 people attended the hour-long service and then, with the casket open, paid their last respects to the denominational leader. Burial was Dec. 4 in Birmingham, Ala.

Hobbs had requested the service be held in the chapel, where his wife Frances was memorialized following her death in 1984. Hobbs, as pastor from 1949-72, designed the

chapel, including beautiful stained-glass "teaching windows." Hobbs recently had asked his longtime friend, W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Church, Dallas, to officiate his memorial service.

"We (Hobbs and Criswell) have been friends since 1931," Criswell said, "and I have never had a sweeter prayer partner and encourager in all of my life."

Hobbs was a natural peace-maker, Criswell said, noting the two had never had a disagreement over the years.

"You would have thought (Hobbs) would have been egotistical (for all of his accomplishments)," Criswell said, "but that was the farthest thing from the truth. He was the humblest, sweetest person you could ever know."

Criswell recalled Hobbs must have known his time was short because Hobbs told him at the 1995 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Atlanta "this is my last convention." It was just two weeks before his death that Hobbs, who was with Criswell at a dedication ceremony for the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University, Birmingham, told Criswell, "I want you to conduct my memorial service." Criswell said he would never forget the look on Hobbs' face.

Criswell spoke from Hebrews 11:40 and Philippians 1:21, recalling "God hath provided some better thing for us..." Criswell said Hobbs "went to glory" while talking to his son Jerry on the phone beside his hospital bed.

capsules

SOUTHERN BAPTIST AID HEADED TO BOSNIA, CROATIA: RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The Foreign Mission Board (FMB) released \$255,000 for relief to the former Yugoslavia region in late November, including \$120,000 for Bosnia-Herzegovina and \$135,000 for Croatia. The appropriation to Bosnia is only half of what missionaries in the region actually requested, but the board's human needs office was forced to wait until more funds become available. Since September 1992, after conflict broke out in the former Yugoslavia, the FMB has allocated nearly \$2 million for refugee relief and hunger relief ministries in the region. Human needs coffers for foreign fields have slid during the past years. Giving is down about 15% this year from last year during the same period, and projections show that giving this year will equal only three-fourths of that in 1991. More than \$1 million in hunger requests are outstanding. The request for Bosnia calls for missionaries to work with Croatian Baptists to buy and distribute 2,000 two-person food parcels in Sajevo during a three-month period, and 3,500 parcels for three other areas to be distributed during a six-month period.

STANLEY REQUESTS JURY IN DIVORCE TRIAL: ATLANTA (ABP) — Noted television preacher and Southern Baptist Convention leader Charles Stanley is asking for a jury trial in a divorce case brought by his wife Anna. The trial, originally scheduled for Nov. 27, has been postponed until Jan. 22, according to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Observers expect another delay, however, and predict the case will not come to trial earlier than April or May. Stanley filed papers Nov. 28 requesting a jury trial in the proceeding after a one-day effort to mediate the divorce failed, lawyers for Anna Stanley said. Stanley, pastor of the 13,000-member First Church of Atlanta, is seen nationwide in the "In Touch" television broadcasts of the church's services. He was president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1985-86. Stanley and his wife have been separated since 1992. They have been married for 40 years. First Church, Atlanta, has historically refused to allow divorced men to serve as deacons or pastors.



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

I am clinically obese. My body is definitely not a temple of God, and that makes me feel bad since I try to be a good Christian.

woman, but I've developed an uncontrollable attraction to a co-worker. How can I resist this temptation?

Being a good Christian is more about honoring God with who you are rather than what you do. If you are clinically obese, I assume your doctor has told you that your metabolism is such that losing weight is very difficult (if not impossible) and that your obesity is not something that can be controlled by diet. In that case, your condition does not mean that you aren't honoring God. Being obese does not mean that your body is not God's temple. A temple is a place of worship and peace. How are you striving to be a good Christian? Do you take care of yourself? Do you eat all the time and not exercise? Are you always trying to calm your "hunger monster," or are you looking for ways to help others and worship God? Our bodies — God's temples — come in all shapes and sizes. The real question you must answer for yourself is how you intend to use the skills and talents God has given you to best serve him and others. You may not be small in stature, but you can be tall in truth and virtue.

I am a happily married

James 1:14-15 (NIV) tells us, "But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." This attraction comes from the darkest part of your nature, looking for satisfaction. This is the temptation James describes, and this is where your battle must begin — not after temptation moves into action and ends in deadly sin. A steady diet of spiritual insight is required. Keep your prayer time and your quiet time intact so you can hear God. This temptation may also be a wake-up call for your marriage. Keep photographs of your husband and family close by, so you can focus on them instead of the co-worker. Take time with your spouse for marriage enrichment activities. Get away for a weekend. Plan frequent "dates." Lastly, talk with a trusted friend who will pray for you and hold you accountable during your struggle. These ideas will help keep your temptation from growing into sin that will bring certain death to your marriage — and your soul.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.



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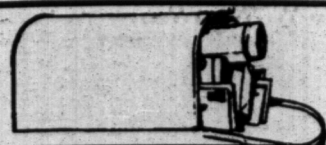
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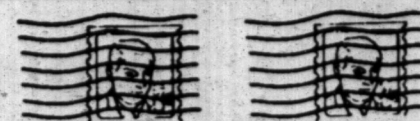
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Letters to the editor



"Mean" parents

Editor:

I was abused as a child. When I got home from school, I had to milk the cows, chop stove wood, and feed the livestock. No television after supper (it hadn't been invented yet). I had to do my homework before going to bed.

My parents did not ask me if I wanted to go to church — they took me. How mean can one get?

I suppose this got me confused, because I've been going to church ever since. Strange how such acts of force can become habit.

My folks were so hard on me that they were careful about the company I kept.

They were so old-fashioned that they were against drinking whiskey and smoking cigarettes, and to them dancing was evil.

When I told them the other kids were doing those things, my

parents' answer was, "Do you want to go to hell because they do?"

I'll bet that if I was a kid now, they would not even want me to use drugs or go to a school that handed out free condoms and never mentioned God and his creation. I would not even be allowed to carry a gun to school.

My wife and I visited the same inhuman treatment on our daughter. Now, she teaches a ladies' Sunday School class and imposed

the same abuse on her children. Even our grandchildren are raising our six great-grandchildren under those horrible restrictions. It must be hereditary!

For all my folks' corrective measures, they never left a blister but they surely left a lasting impression. We thank God every day for that "mean" Mama and Papa."

Tom Walden
Jackson

well-planned and prepared representatives of our Stewardship Department who did a fine job working with our people and teaching principles of stewardship.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my appreciation for a job well done.

Terry Cutrer, pastor
First Church,
Baldwyn

Mountaintop experience yields insight

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (BP) — The problem with mountaintop experiences is there is nowhere to go but down.

Brandon Boozer of Arlington, Texas, and a senior at New York University, decided to spend his last day on a mission trip to Alaska climbing Flattop, a plateau rising 3,000 feet above the valley floor near Anchorage.

He was with eight other members of the mission team from Graffiti inner-city ministry center in New York City. They had worked six days in unskilled construction tasks at two Anchorage churches and had given themselves two days to explore the state.

Five members of the ministry team dropped out of the king-on-

the-mountain game when they broke through the crust to waist-deep Alaskan snow.

Boozer, fellow BSUer Amy Raines, and Taylor Field, pastor/director at Graffiti, determined to go all the way. It was only 1,500 feet more.

"Things were getting slick in the mist," Boozer said. "The last 50 feet was a vertical climb with an 80- to 85-degree angle. The top 15 to 20 feet was just snow, and I wasn't wearing gloves."

"I was ecstatic," exclaimed Boozer. "All the correlations came into my mind. In life, you do your best to climb up, and only a few make it. I made it to the top!"

"Then I realized that unlike life's ladder, I had to get off the mountain. I was scared. I didn't

have the guts to go down. I knew it would be a long fall onto the rocks below."

But climbing backwards was the only way off the mountain. "As I went down, all I had to rely on was Taylor's voice," Boozer said.

"I was panicky. My hands were slippery — no gloves. My shoes were sliding. I just kept trusting that voice."

A scriptural analogy came to him, Boozer said. "In life, things can happen and you just slip. You didn't mean to. You didn't plan to. As we go down from our mountaintop experiences with the Lord, we can slip."

"Unlike the mountain, though, God is much more forgiving," Boozer said.

"Challenge to build"

Editor:

Please allow me the privilege to say a bit about our Stewardship Department for Mississippi Baptists. Many of you may not realize that we are the only state convention with a "Challenge to Build" program which does not charge any participating churches. Normally, one would assume such a "free" program would be second-rate or inferior.

This has not been our experience, however. Our church has just completed receiving pledges for three years to our building program. The results can truly be termed miraculous. Not only did we go well over our goals, but our budget receipts have increased.

Much of the credit needs to go to the sacrificial spirit of our folks. Part of the credit needs to go to the

On aid for students

Editor:

On behalf of the ministerial students receiving aid from the Mississippi Baptist Convention, I would like to say, "Thank you." There have been countless times in which this aid has determined whether or not a minister or church-related vocation student would receive an education. The Board of Ministerial Education is providing a great ministry, and it is greatly appreciated by all ministerial and church-related vocation students at Blue Mountain College.

As president of the Ministerial Alliance, I can assure you that every dollar sent to students here at Blue Mountain College is a valuable investment toward the furtherance of God's kingdom. Thank you and may God bless you.

Brian Rainey
Blue Mountain



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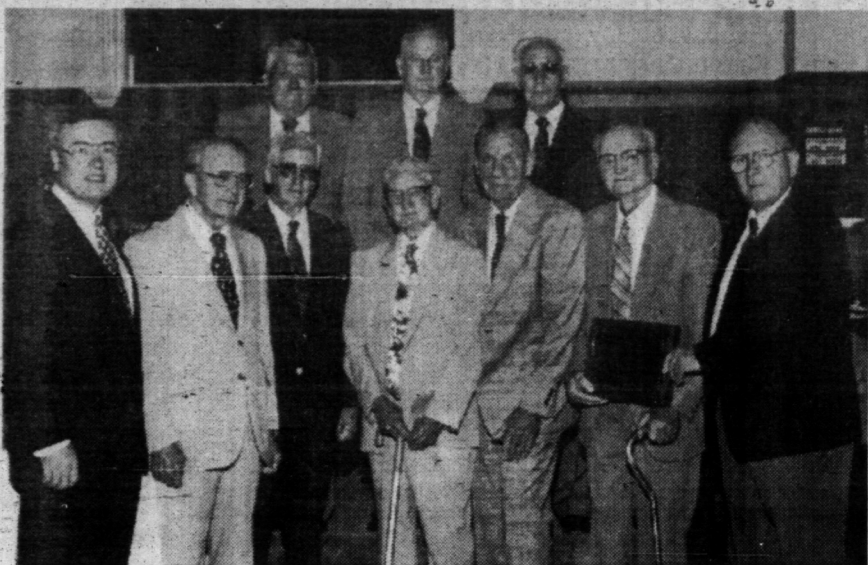
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Our prayer for each of our Mississippi Pastors is that 1996 will be the most fruitful year of your ministry!!

GOD BLESS YOU AS YOU SERVE HIM

Names in the News



The Friendship Sunday School Class of Briar Hill Church, Florence, presented their teacher, Robert Compere, a plaque in appreciation for teaching over 60 years. Pictured from left, first row, are Malcolm Pinion, pastor, Millet Padelford, Bill Neal; Ernest Boteler, James Hemphill, Robert Compere, Dan Stewart; back row, Paul Bearden, Grady McRaney, and Leroy Jones. Not pictured was Dale Jordan.

Glen T. Williams has announced he will retire Dec. 31, after 20 years as director of missions in Pike Association. He will be honored at a reception Dec. 10 at the associational office in McComb. His retirement ends 43 years of full-time ministry as a pastor, minister of education, and director of missions in California, Texas, and Mississippi. He will be available for pulpit supply, interim pastorates, and church consultations. Contact him at 613 Missouri Ave., McComb 39648; telephone (601) 684-0971.

Williams

Jack Lott was recently ordained as deacon at Victory Church, Bassfield.

Daisy Coulter, who recently resigned after serving 17 years as church clerk, was honored at Victory Church, Bassfield.

Charles and Indy Whitten will be speakers for Missions Day at Hebron Church, Yazoo Association, on Dec. 10. They will speak at both morning and evening services. A covered-dish dinner will be served following the morning service.



Victory Church, Mathiston, held Deacon Ordination on Oct. 15. Pictured from left are Danny Smith, pastor; Burle Peacock; Jimmy Doss; Tommy Phelps; and Jimmy Carden, chairman of deacons.

Bill Baker and his wife Jill will be honored by First Church, Clinton, on Dec. 10. A reception honoring the pastor upon his retirement will begin at 2 p.m. in the church fellowship hall. At 6 p.m., the evening

service will feature special music and tributes to Baker by friends and associates. Baker will leave First Church, Clinton, on Dec. 31, after almost 23 years as pastor.

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Christmas Programs

Newhebron Church, Newhebron, will present two Christmas programs: "1-800-Christmas," on Dec. 10 at 7 p.m., and "Everlasting Light," at 7 p.m. on Dec. 16 and 17. "1-800-Christmas" is a musical, to be presented by the church's children's choirs. "Everlasting Light" is a presentation of the church's sanctuary and children's choirs and drama group. Charles E. Davis Sr. is pastor. David Henderson is minister of music.

"Christmas on Reflection Lake," a revised version of "Christmas in the Cottonpatch," will be presented nightly, Dec. 10 through Dec. 31, beginning at 7 p.m. nightly except Sundays. On Sunday nights, the presentation will begin at 8 p.m. A production of Gilead Ministries, the program's site is on Lafayette County Road 244, halfway between New Albany and Oxford. For more information, contact Lanny Autry at (601) 534-0659.

Revival Results

Harrisburg, Tupelo: 22 professions of faith, including baptisms; Oct. 29-Nov. 1; Michael Gott, Jacksonville, Tenn., preaching; Larry Russell, Greenville, Texas, music; Forrest Sheffield, pastor.

Staff Changes

John F. Gibson Jr. has resigned as pastor of First Church, Greenwood, effective Nov. 12.

Bob Horner, pastor of First Church, Hattiesburg, has resigned to accept the pastorate of Peachtree Corners Church in Atlanta. He served the Hattiesburg congregation for three years.

First Church, Flowood, has called Danny Brock as minister of music effective Sept. 10. A native of Jackson, Brock received his education at Mississippi College.

Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, has called Joseph I. Rodgers as minister of single adults and recreation, effective Oct. 10. A native of Atlanta, Ga., Rodgers received his education at Carson-Newman College and Southwestern Seminary. His previous place of service was Bethany Place Church, Richmond, Va.



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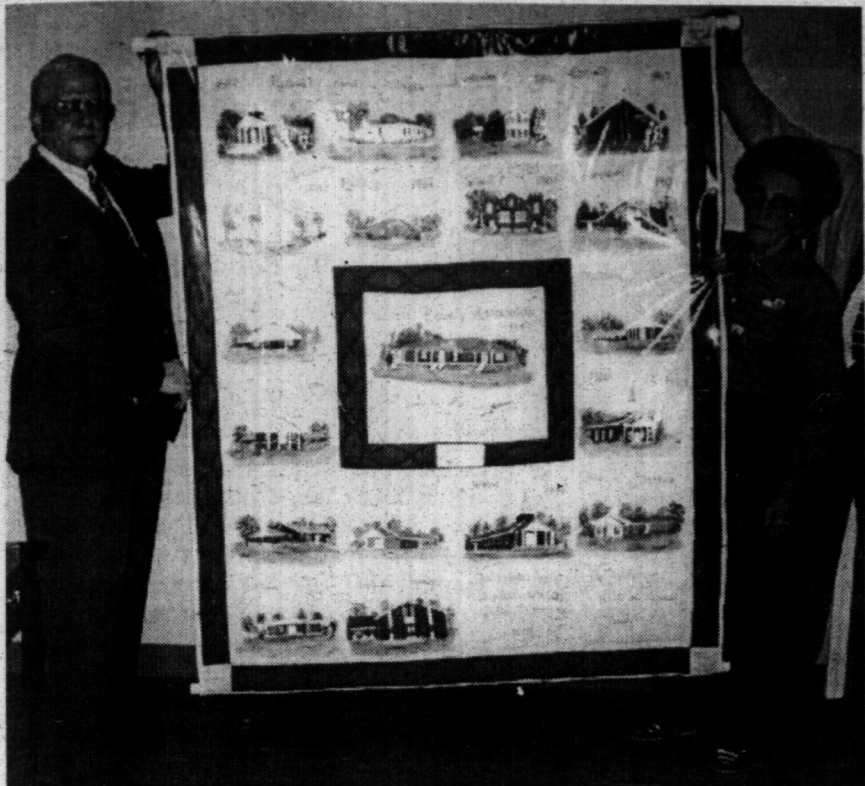
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Just for the Record



Lamar County Association, Purvis, was presented a hand painted quilt of the new association building and the churches of the association. Each church was placed in the order it was organized. The quilt was made by Mary Cole, a former resident who now resides in Blytheville, Ark. She presented the quilt in memory of her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Harman Aultman. The quilt took 300 hours to complete. Pictured with Cole is the associational moderator, Louis Nicolosi. Doug Benedict is the director of missions.

Jasper Association will hold a mission center open house and dedication service on Dec. 10. The open house will be from 2 to 4 p.m.

The dedication service will begin at 2:30 p.m. Grady Crowell, Clarke Association director of missions, will be the guest speaker. For more information, call Dave Abbott, Jasper director of missions, at (601) 764-3910 or (601) 764-2471.

The Mustard Seed home for the mentally and physically handicapped will hold a ceramics open house on Saturday, Dec. 9, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Located on Luckney Road in Rankin County, the home is supported by Jackson-area agencies and churches, and helps foster independent living skills in its handicapped residents.

Etowah Association, Gadsden, Ala., is seeking a Church Development Ministries Director. Send resume to CDMC Search Committee, Etowah Baptist Association, P.O. Box 797, Gadsden, AL 35901 or call (205) 547-1691 for more information. Resumes should be received by Jan. 15, 1996.

The Mississippi College Music Department will present its 10th annual "Festival of Lights" Christmas Celebration Dec. 7 and 8. The event will be held at 8:15 p.m. both nights in Spell Auditorium of Provine Chapel.



Euclatubba Church, Saultillo, has organized its first active mission team since the church's beginning in 1859. Members of the team (above, left to right) are Eugene and Ruth Spearman; Barbara Sanford; Janice Moore; and Carolyn and David Lenzini, outreach leaders.

The church's **RA group** (below), led by Glenn Posey and David Lenzini, and **GA group** (bottom), led by Sherry Williams and Tessa Grammer, are also beginning to work on local mission projects. Johnny Hearn is pastor.



Mt. Moriah Church, Bogue Chitto, recently held its GA Recognition Service. Pictured, top row, from left, are Magen Prather, Kaci Williams, Anna Beth Smith, Michelle Thibodeaux; bottom row, Katie Moss, Susan Burris, and Jessica Smith. Carolyn White is GA director and Danny Moss is pastor.



A SeniorSing music festival sponsored by the Church Music Ministries Department of the Arkansas Convention, was held at First Church, Hot Springs, Nov. 16. The senior adult choir of First Church, Clinton, participated. Kenneth Heckman (from left), 88, and Mattie Johnson, 84, of First Church, Clinton, received the Opismathy Awards.

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Uniform For the discouraged



By Andy Brasher
Isaiah 51

Have you ever been discouraged? If so, was your discouragement based on personal failure? I'm afraid most of the time, those two terms go hand in hand.

When we fail, discouragement prevails, and depression soon sets in. During this time of inner conflict, most of us search the past for victories won. From surveying the past, we seek direction to a brighter tomorrow.

Every person experiences discouragement. At times, we all fail. Each one of us, if put to the test, could name thousands of personal failures, and subsequently, thousands of times we have been discouraged.

Yet, in the midst of our discouragement, Christians can find eternal encouragement by realizing our past relationship with God and appealing to God's promises for a brighter and more glorious future.

Appeal to the past (vv. 1-2). In the annals of Jewish history, the Jews were prone not to pursue righteousness. Neither do we!

Their history is clouded by rebellion and the rejection of God's Word. So is ours!

We often hear the phrase, "fallen on deaf ears." It's not surprising that Isaiah's first statement is a command: "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness."

Israel had disobeyed God. They had failed to listen to God. This realization had led them to discouragement. Isaiah reminded them of the past, when God turned the faithless discouragement of Abraham to a promised blessing.

In essence, Isaiah urged them to "look to the rock from which you were hewn." The rock is a metaphor for faith in God. We all should look to that same rock today!

Promise to the future (v. 3). The future of Zion would eventually be bright, as long as they listened to God and kept his promises. That is still true today for each one of us.

Isaiah's reference in verse 3 centers around the prophetic restoration of Israel from the Babylonian captivity that ended in 444 B.C. under the leadership of Nehemiah. The entire restoration process took nearly 100 years. It sure takes a long time for some of us to listen.

The point of this passage is simple: God seeks to comfort his own during times of distress, if those in distress would simply turn and listen to him.

The permanence of God's salvation and righteousness (vv. 4-6). No matter what punishment may befall us due to our sinfulness, God's salvation and righteousness is forever! There is simply no greater truth in the Bible.

God's love for Israel and his love for you is undeniable and — thank goodness — it is eternal. Every Christian, regardless of what denominational name tag he wears, should find comfort and encouragement in these words: "My salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished."

The persecution of God's people (vv. 7-8). Because of Israel's continual disobedience, they were punished. The individual problems we encounter are often a by-product of our failure to listen and respond to the will of God. Every person has the law of God imprinted on his heart (Rom. 1:18-20).

Failure and discouragement come when we reject the law of God and substitute man's law instead. And yet, when persecution and punishment do come — and they will — let us remember these words of eternal encouragement: "My salvation shall be forever."

Brasher is pastor of Como Church, Como.

Bible Book Commoner to queen



By Larry McDonald
Esther 1, 2

For the Hebrew people, there were three returns to Jerusalem from captivity. The first was led by Zerubbabel in order to rebuild the temple. The second was led by Ezra to rebuild the spiritual lives of the people. The third was led by Nehemiah to rebuild the wall.

The book of Esther comes between the first and second return and fits chronologically between Chapters 6 and 7 of Ezra. The book of Esther deals with events of the Jewish people who were still in Persia.

The events of the book began with a banquet that went on for several days. At that banquet, King Xerxes became drunk.

As the effects of alcohol clouded his thinking, he ordered Queen Vashti (Vashti means "sweetheart") to come before his guests to display her beauty.

Although not explicitly stated, many believe the order was for her to appear wearing only her crown (1:11). Queen Vashti refused to display her body for others to see.

It was a grave offense for someone — even the queen — to refuse an order from the king (1:10-12). Queen Vashti must be commended for her courage just as King Xerxes must be condemned for his abuse of alcohol and his use and abuse of women and their bodies.

Although Queen Vashti did what was right, she suffered the consequences of going against the order of the king. She was banished from his presence and her royal position was taken away from her (1:19).

From this point on in the book, the title "queen" is no longer used with the name "Vashti."

It appears after King Xerxes overcame his anger and regretted his actions against Vashti, but he could not change his decree.

His personal advisors encouraged him to start a search for a new queen out of the "beautiful young virgins" (2:2) of his kingdom. King Xerxes liked the advice and followed it.

At this point in the book Mordecai and Esther are introduced.

Mordecai was a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin, even though his name was of Babylonian origin. His forefathers had been brought into exile by Nebuchadnezzar, along with Jehoiachin, king of Judah.

Mordecai had a cousin whose Jewish name was Hadasah (meaning "myrtle"). Hadasah's parents were dead, so Mordecai adopted her as his daughter. Hadasah was best known by her Persian name Esther (meaning "star"). Esther was a beautiful young woman (2:5-7).

Esther was brought into Susa to prepare to meet the king. After she had completed many months of beauty treatment, she went to visit the king.

She won the favor of the king over all the other young women. He chose her to be the new queen and take the place of Vashti. He gave a banquet and declared a holiday in order to celebrate his finding a new queen (2:16-17).

This reminds us of how God used unusual and sometimes difficult circumstances to bring about his purpose through the lives of Joseph, Daniel, and now Esther. It was no accident that she became queen, because God had a purpose for her in the coming days.

Maybe you are going through unusual and difficult circumstances in your life. Hold fast to the fact that God has a divine purpose for you and he can only bring about that purpose by taking you through hard times.

McDonald is pastor of Castlewoods Church, Brandon.

Life and Work Jesus, Elvis, and Coke



By Bob Rogers
John 6

In 1993 Kinky Friedman published a mystery novel with a bizarre title: **Jesus, Elvis and Coca-Cola**. Supposedly these are three of the best-known names in the world, and they also represent three different attempts at finding satisfaction: through entertainment (Elvis), by purchasing happiness ("Have a Coke and a smile"), or by spiritual fulfillment (Jesus).

Most of us know that real satisfaction only comes through a relationship with Jesus Christ, but we often act as if it comes from Elvis or Coke. It was the same way in Jesus' day.

After he fed the 5,000 (vv. 1-15), the crowds followed Jesus and asked him what work God required them to do (v. 28).

Jesus carefully chose a reply that derailed their train of thought. "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent" (v. 29).

What a surprising answer! Instead of a 12-step recovery program, Jesus said "believe." This verse is the perfect reply to the person who insists on works salvation. Jesus said that we are saved by works — the work of belief.

"Believe" translates the Greek verb *pisteuo*, which means to have faith, confidence, and trust. This answer seemed too simple to the Jews; they wanted more details, so they asked Jesus for a sign to convince them to believe (vv. 30-31).

The gospel of John records seven "signs" that Jesus performed (2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-9; 6:5-13; 6:16-21; 9:1-7; 11:1-44). However, the Jews were looking at the signs themselves instead of looking to the One to whom the signs pointed.

When Moses led the starving Israelites in the wilderness, God provided bread on the ground like dew every morning, called "manna" (Ex. 16). It was widely believed by Jews in Jesus' day that the Messiah would repeat the miracle of the manna. Jesus told them that they were looking for faith in all the wrong places. "It was not Moses" who gave them the manna, but "my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven" (v. 32).

Jesus spoke of the "true bread" to redirect their thinking from earthly things to heavenly things. When they asked for this "true bread," Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (v. 35).

This is the first of seven "I am" statements of Jesus recorded in the gospel of John (6:35, 8:12; 10:7; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1). These "I am" statements flash back to Exodus 3:14, when the Lord revealed his divine name ("I am who I am," or Yahweh) to Moses in the burning bush. Jesus did not simply confuse his verb tenses when he said, "Before Abraham was, I am!" (John 8:58). By saying "I am," Jesus was claiming to be the Lord God in flesh.

The single Greek word *eimi* would have been sufficient to say "I am," but Jesus added emphasis by saying *ego eimi*: "I — I am." *Ego eimi* is used in all seven "I am" statements and in John 8:58.

What did Jesus mean by saying, "I am the bread of life"? In contrast to their desire for satisfaction in the temporary resource of bread, Jesus was offering ultimate fulfillment in a relationship with himself by faith. "He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (v. 35).

Although his original audience refused to believe (v. 36), Jesus knew that there would be those who would come to him, including modern readers of these words. His arms remain wide open to any believer, whom he "will never drive away" (v. 37).

As the "bread of life," Jesus not only offers real satisfaction, but also eternal security. "I shall lose none of all that he has given me" (v. 39). The eternal security of the believer is stated several times in the gospel of John (5:24; 10:28).

There is only one source to satisfy your deepest longing: Jesus Christ, the bread of life. He alone can give your life meaning and purpose that will last into eternity. He alone can keep you safe and secure from ever falling into the hands of the Enemy.

Is there any reason why you cannot trust Jesus with your life?

Rogers is pastor of First Church, Poplarville.



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Miss Amanda Bryant, 9th grader at Sumner Hill Jr. High in Clinton, won 1st place in the Celebrate Life: Share the Ribbon Essay Contest. Amanda's essay talks about how the use of alcohol impacted she and her family. Amanda also won 1st place in an art contest at Sumner Hill. CONGRATULATIONS AMANDA!!!

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Blake Burton
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Jackson Prep student volunteers, coordinated by Mary Nell Jeffreys, gave of their time to help The Baptist Children's Village maintain the grounds on our India Nunnery Campus. These ten students are part of a Senior Service Day project where 100 high school seniors do volunteer work in the Jackson Community. Young people who volunteered at The Village were John Autry, Steve Fielding, Paul Bryant, Robbie Armstrong, Gate Davis, David Willey, Davis Peden and John Hurley.



BCV young people shared two skits with BCV friends at our most recent Area Conference in Laurel, Mississippi. Indian Springs Baptist Church graciously prepared a delicious dinner for our almost 100 guests. Following dinner we heard testimony from Alumnus, Sean Milner; and a word from Executive Director, Ronny Robinson. Buddy Keyes is the pastor of Indian Springs.

Mr. & Mrs. Gus Evans
Melville Coody
Mr. & Mrs. V. Ray Smith
Johnnie Lee Cooper*
Mr. & Mrs. Floyd E. Coil
Johnny Lee Cooper *
TEL SS, Springfield BC
Jennifer Cotten
Ms. Sheila Y. Yarbrough
Miss Lillian Cox
Dr. & Mrs. Harry C. Frye, Jr.
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Bobbie Joe Crosby
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Frances, Richie & Grace Defenbaugh
Mr. & Mrs. Earl Gillon

(to be continued)

First person...

Ukraine trips expose spiritual longing in former USSR

By Maxine Hayes

A visiting missionary started a fire in the hearts of the members of Pinelake Church, Brandon, in 1992, and that fire is still burning!

Missionary Ralph Bethea Jr. spoke of the opportunities in the former Soviet Union countries. Pinelake Church members have braved the unknown every year since 1992 to take God's Word to the cities and villages of Ukraine.

Lannie Wilbourn, who was then pastor of Pinelake Church, developed discipleship, evangelical, and one-on-one witness training to prepare laypeople for the missionary journeys.

These lay missionaries warn, "If you don't want your life changed, don't go to Ukraine with Dr. Wilbourn."

I remember watching a crowd of people standing in the rain around the plaza in Uzgorod as we set up sound equipment for our worship service. As the service began, the rain stopped and the people listened intently as Wilbourn presented the gospel message.

At the invitation, the crowd surged forward eagerly. We stayed into the night telling people of God's love for them. Many received Christ into their hearts.

It was also in Uzgorod that we met with the Chernobyl Victims Association. (Chernobyl is the Soviet-designed nuclear power plant in Ukraine that experienced a major reactor accident several years ago.)

Their plight is most tragic. They have been moved from their homes in Chernobyl, and several families live together in small apartments, sharing a single bathroom.

They have no medicines or access to medical care. We gave them several boxes of non-prescription drugs — the kind we take daily without thinking of how God has blessed us and our country.

As we held Bible study one day in the Uzgorod plaza, 17 people crowded onto benches and strained to hear the speaker's translation. People walked by

and children played in the plaza, but the people on the benches ignored the distractions.

One man stood beside the translator, nodding his head. An elderly woman riveted her eyes on the speaker's Bible, hungrily soaking up each word he said.

A tall Russian man listened on the sidelines. A young woman started to leave but one of our helpers waved for her to stay; she was the first one to accept Christ at the invitation. The Russian man's eyes filled with tears as he told us he would rather hold a Bible in his hand than a weapon.

Wilbourn and a trio of Pinelake choir members presented the gospel on Uzgorod television. Such television broadcasts reach millions in Ukraine, and Christian programming is one of Pinelake's ongoing efforts.

I noticed the TV studio crew was moved by Wilbourn's message. They gratefully received the Bibles offered to them, and thanked us profusely.

The Ukrainian people were under bondage for 70 years, the last 40 years under Soviet communism that did not allow them to own their land or their businesses. They were not allowed to worship God.

The Christians who went "underground" to worship in secret are hesitant to openly speak of God or accept public worship. Christians are mainly the older population, and they are very dedicated.

They have a strict code for new converts and do not take lightly the acceptance of Christ. Church members we encountered in Ternopil would not allow anyone under age 18 to be baptized, and there was a probation period for new adult believers.

Young people, for the most part, are still searching for God. They have seen what happened to their parents and grandparents. Some do not have a family background of believers.

We were able to go into the



Lannie Wilbourn (foreground), former pastor of Pinelake Church, Brandon, prepares a baptism service for 16 new Christians in Uzgorod, Ukraine, during a mission trip in July 1993. Ukrainians, who suffered under communist rule and official atheism for decades, are hungry for the gospel, according to Pinelake Church members who participate in the mission trips to that country. (BR special photo by Janet Holloway)

villages surrounding Ternopil and speak in their churches — usually someone's home or a small frame building. There was no indoor plumbing, and the buildings were heated by wood-burning stoves.

In 1995, we were the first Americans allowed inside these churches. The people were warm and receptive. They asked many questions about Christianity in America.

A question that intrigued me was, "How does the church (in America) discipline its members?"

As the Pinelake lay missionaries reminisce about Ukraine, we always speak of the love we encountered from our translators, who were mostly English students grateful for the experience of speaking with us in English.

The wonderful surprise to them (and us) was the close bond that occurred as we worked through them to tell the Ukraine people about Christ. Many of these young people accepted Christ and have made lifelong friendships with the Pinelake lay missionaries.

We held a crusade in Ternopil in the Field of Flowers, a large amphitheater inside a beautiful

park. God blessed this small band of Christians trying to do his will.

The number of people who came forward each night was equal to the number of counselors available. We believe God will send enough messengers to receive those who want to come to him.

We pray that more people will join us as we go next year to spread God's word in the country we have adopted. Your life will be changed as you have the wonderful experience of bringing God's salvation to another human being.

Rankin Association is planning the next mission trip for June 27-July 7, 1996. Our prayer is to take 50 lay missionaries from Mississippi to spread God's message. For more information, contact Rankin Association at (601) 939-2182, or Lannie Wilbourn at (601) 829-1009.

Hayes is a member of Pinelake Church, Brandon.

With a Lottie Moon gift...

Besides helping provide basic missionary support, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering helps support missionary operating budgets overseas. When the goal is reached, it also helps finance capital projects, such as church buildings and missionary houses.



With a Lottie Moon gift of \$1, missionaries in Namibia can purchase five tracts to distribute to Lozi people who have never heard the gospel.

With a Lottie Moon gift of \$5, missionaries in Belize can buy one Bible and a set of crayons for Sunday School.

With a Lottie Moon gift of \$10, Southern Baptists can provide five Romanian Bibles to be given to new converts in Romania.

With a Lottie Moon gift of \$50, missionaries in Japan can buy one tank of gas for a missionary vehicle.

With a Lottie Moon gift of \$100, Southern Baptist representatives in Jordan can provide 17 Jesus film videos for distribution.

With a Lottie Moon gift of \$500, missionaries in Wales can rent space for Vacation Bible School in a housing estate that has no church building. Last year 350 children were enrolled in Vacation Bible School there.

With a Lottie Moon gift of \$1,000, missionaries in Ethiopia can provide a translation of MasterLife in Tigrinya.

With a Lottie Moon gift of \$5,000, missionaries in Austria can provide financing for a district-wide evangelistic outreach using mass mailings, concerts, and newspaper advertising in conjunction with evangelistic services.

With a Lottie Moon gift of \$10,000, Southern Baptists can provide a year's housing for nine International Service Corps workers to lead Bible studies in 20 villages in Albania.

With a Lottie Moon gift of \$50,000, missionaries in France can purchase a piece of land in a French city to start a church.

With a Lottie Moon gift of \$100,000, missionaries in Taiwan can lend money to a new church to help purchase their own facility.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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LV QV TUHJ ETOZVAO; HOTLUZHP QJNM
PVTMOH: XJM OPV IJBZAC JX OPV UJMY
YMTGVOP AZCP.

FTBVH XZSV: VZCPO

This week's clue: H equals S.

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Four: Twenty-Four.

Baptist Record

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